## THE BROCHURE SERIES

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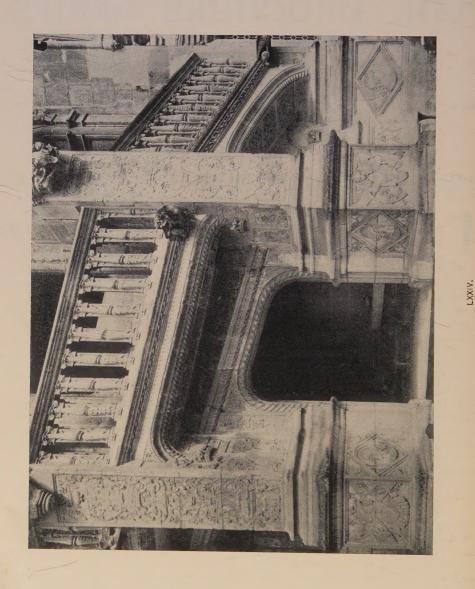
## THE GREAT STAIRCASE, CHATEAU OF BLOIS.

T is possible to realize at the Chateau of Blois even more keenly than elsewhere, the full spirit and movement of the true Renaissance, where such a gem of art and architecture as the wing of Francis I. is placed next to the cold and meaningless productions of Francois Mansard at the height of his reputation, at the most chilling point of his respectability. In this wing, so different from all the rest of the Chateau, lived Gaston d'Orleans, dullest of royal dullards, himself so chillingly respectable that he had formed the plan of delivering up the whole of the palace to the mercies of the reforming Mansard, and would have done so, had not Providence removed him in time, and preserved for the wonder of later ages the fantasies of a creation too unfettered for his slow wit to understand.

The attention of the visitor who first enters the Court of Honor of the Chateau through the Louis XII. door, is at once attracted and enchained by that masterpiece of Renaissance architecture, the Great Staircase. Seen through this doorway, whose low arch serves as a sombre frame to accentuate its dazzling whiteness, it seems less a solid and palpable creation of man's handiwork than a fantasy from the brush of some great scene painter; and the visitor almost hesitates to approach lest he brush against the canvas.

When Charles the Fifth first saw the newly finished spire of the Cathedral of Anvers, he declared that it was so delicate and precious that it might better be enclosed in a casket than to stand exposed to the rude airs of heaven; and if, as some historians say, he stopped at Blois in 1539, he might well have said the same of this staircase, which possesses the same flowery abundance, the same fine arabesques, the same intricate and lacelike carving, till it seems, in truth, less like sculptured stone than cunning jewellers' work.

From the splendid façade of Francis I. juts out a five-sided, projecting, hollow tower, whose four great freestanding buttress piers, which rise from ground to cornice, encase a stone spiral. The vertical mass of these piers is divided into two sections by horizontal mouldings; marking the line of the third story floor; they are furnished with bases and sculptured capitals; in a niche upon the lower part of the face of each of these piers stands the statue of a female figure upon a corbel and under a pinnacled canopy. All these features are set upon lines parallel with the cornice and the base: with these the horizontal elements of the design cease. Every other feature ramps with the gentle ascent of the stairs thus encased. The coping of the staircase, which within them winds its ascending spiral,



marks by its intersections, four superimposed stories of trapezoid form. Those on the ground level give access to the stairway; the others in tiers above the first, are railed in by rich balustrades. The ornament of these balustrades is composed in the first tier of simple spindles, and in the succeeding stories of the salamander and the crowned "F" of Francis I. Applied to the piers, at heights nicely calculated that the eye might appreciate all their details, are the garnished niches and statues before mentioned. Although they have been for three hundred years out of doors, these statues still preserve the clear firm touch of their unknown sculptor's chisel, and there is little doubt that they are either some of the first work of the celebrated Jean Goujon in his youth, or are the productions of that school by which he was first and most directly influenced. The date of Goujon's best work is later than the time at which the wing of Francis I. was built; yet so elaborate a piece of architecture as this staircase may very well have remained without the statues that completed it until long after all the surroundings had been finished.

Goujon was born in 1520, and it is quite possible that while still a simple mason under old Maitre Quesnel, and before the work with Pierre Lescot at St. Germain l'Auxerrois had made him famous, the young artist chiselled these figures, or at least the one on the right hand of the entrance, which particularly recalls various mannerisms in the works that are recognized as his.

The carving of the canopies of these statues is alone worthy of long study. Though every detail varies, yet each contributes gracefully to the perfection of the whole, and here especially it is possible to realize what a labor of love was the work of the old masons; what unlimited time their workmen had to chisel cunningly at the firm white stone beneath the mellow sunshine of Touraine, until each part was filled with something of the individuality of the man whose life was spent in slow and perfect labor with his hands; until the scheme which gave each workman his allotted task was finished in its harmony

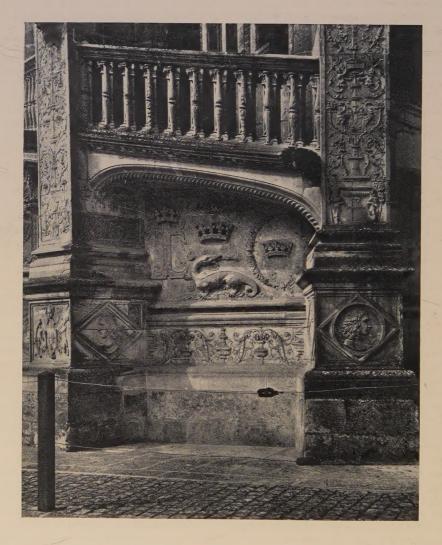
of carving, its strength and delicacy of construction and of form.

From the bases of the piers to the niches in which these statues are set, wind graceful arabesques, as if to gradually prepare the eye for the magnificence which it is to encounter above, and other arabesques ornament the slender colonettes which enmesh the winding stair.

The staircase seems at first to stand free of the facade, breaking the even succession of small columns and their perpendicular descent with the bold projection of its octagonal lines; but above it is embraced and caught into the whole mass by the broad crowning cornice, which gathers within its strengthening bands every various curve. Here is the power and accentuation of the cornice entirely justified; nothing less would have been sufficient; and thus this feature of the façade which might have challenged criticism under other circumstances seems to be quite condoned. The sculptured dormers fret along its edge, searching the air with their pointed tongues, and twice the carved cases of the chimney stacks break aloft through the roof like towers, but the cornice keeps firm hold upon their bases.

Above the cornice this unprecedented composition finishes with an attic order bearing a decorated entablature, of which the vertical elements are strongly marked, and a balustrade. It is here that the art of the Renaissance speaks its dernier mot, concentrates, and exhausts all its riches. Here the architect has heaped up and reproduced with a prodigality which does not, however, preclude harmony, all the motives employed in the lower portions; and the eye, which has arrived at this height after a survey of increasing splendors, rests astounded and fascinated by the numberless resources and the infinite delicacy of the sculpture, which is comparable only to some exquisitely worked bit of Chinese ivory.

Such is the exterior of this beautiful staircase. The façade which frames it, the gallery which crowns the façade, the dormer windows surmounted by niches which are seen behind this gallery, and within which are set



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Great Staircase, Blois, Detail.

charming figurines of children, — all these fine and ingenious details seem, despite their importance, to be merely

accessory.

"But the wonders of this perfect structure do not cease with its outward walls. Within the stairs wind upwards, folding around their central shaft as the petals of a tulip fold one within another, and by a slight curve at the attachment of each step a strange look of life and growth is produced that is marvellously helped by the ascending spiral of the column which supports the whole; its waving lines rush upwards like a flame blown from beneath, or like the flying spiral of a jet of water falling fast yet strongly from a height; there is in it a beauty that is elemental, a touch of that same nature that curves the tall shaft of the iris upwards from the pool in which it grows. But the delicate strength of this central column reproduces with an even greater accuracy the lines that in natural objects are most beautiful because most adapted to the purpose they fulfil; the spiral upon its shaft is the exact curve which is contained within a seashell, for the beauty of the work is of that necessary order which comes of perfect skill, and finds its ultimate justification in the essential harmony of natural structures. In this particular case it seems more than probable that an actual shell was consciously used as a model; for the absolutely unique double curve of the steps, with their relation to the ascending curves from which they grow, is precisely the same as the spiral and its attachments in the There is a more striking correspondence still: the lines upon the outside of the top part of the shell will be found to have the same arrangement as the balustrades on the exterior of the staircase, and are reversed in exactly the same way as the spiral. It is tempting to complete the hypothesis by imagining such a shell to have been in the possession of the architect to whom the first plans of the work were due; he must have been a man who collected natural objects to study the secrets of their beauty; a man of unequalled constructive power, for the groinwork and vaulting of the stairs is not the least

astounding part of the whole building; a man, too, of extraordinary imagination, and with a sense of harmonious proportion rarely equalled in the world. Scarcely any one of the time save Leonardo da Vinci possessed a genius at once so universal and so thorough, and Leonardo was at Amboise, a little farther down the river, just when the first plans of this staircase would have been required. Is it possible that Francis found one last sketch, one remnant of the dying artist's genius, and employed to decorate his newest château, the last tour de force of the great master for whom he had no care to build a tomb?"

No château better demonstrates than Blois the result which the architects of the Renaissance knew how to draw from that thankless and, in our modern buildings, too often graceless necessary, the staircase. Whether these long stone spirals were shut into turrets which suddenly jutted from the angles of their buildings or sprung directly from the ground, whether they rose outside the building, as at Blois, or, as at Chambord, constituted the core and axis of the edifice, they are always treated con amore, and become, under their hands, not obstacles, but very triumphs of art.

LXXIII.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS.

LXXIV.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, ENTRANCE.

LXXV.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, DETAIL.

LXXVI.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, DETAIL.

LXXVII.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, UPPER PORTION.

LXXVIII.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, INTERIOR.

LXXIX.

GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, CENTRAL PIER, DETAIL.

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GREAT STAIRCASE, BLOIS, CEILING.



LXXVI.

Great Staircase, Blois, Detail.

## The Brochure Series

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While the Editor of The Brochure Series cannot hold himself responsible for the care of unsolicited photographs, drawings or manuscripts which may be submitted to him, he will always be glad to consider them; and will return those that he cannot use when postage for that purpose is provided.

The November issue of The Bro-CHURE SERIES will differ from the other numbers of the volume, but will differ in a fashion with which, we imagine, few of our readers will be disposed to cavil. It is to be a "Special Library Number," containing at least three times the customary quota of pages, and more than twenty-four full-page engravings of representative European and American library buildings and in-To the text of this number Mr. William E. Foster of the Providence, R.I., library, who has made a special study of library planning, will contribute an eminently practical and valuable article dealing with this subject from the librarian's point of view; and Mr. Russell Sturgis will write of libraries in general.

The existent literature on library construction is very meagre, and we are confident that this number of The Brochure will be one which, in the language of the advertisements, no architect "can afford to be without." The price of single copies of this special issue will be ten cents.

Of particular interest to draughtsmen will be an article contributed to the forthcoming Number 8 (Volume IV.) of the *Architectural Review*. It is by Mr. Otto Heinigke, and deals with the designing of stained-glass windows. The illustrations show mediæval windows in comparison with the most advanced work of modern glass-makers.

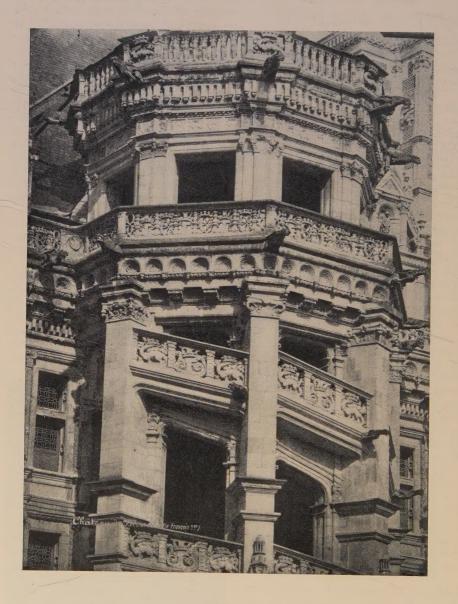
## Claude Fayette Bragdon.

It has been recently said of Walter Pater, by a discriminating critic, that he "was a man whose fineness and subtilty of emotion were united with an exact and profound scholarship; in whom a personality, singularly unconventional and singularly full of charm, found for its expression an absolutely personal and an absolutely novel style. The man and his style, to those who knew him, were identical; for his style was, unlike that of other men, concentrated upon a kind of perfection which for the most part they could not even distinguish, and he was the most lovable of men to those who rightly apprehended him; the most fascinating, the most generous and helpful of private friends."

With equal propriety and equal force these words may be applied to the subject of this brief, and of necessity, inadequate appreciation.

It is no easy task to classify and analyze Mr. Bragdon's productions, for while his mind is conspicuous for its clearness and sanity, its comprehensiveness is to the average man a source of bewilderment, for its range is apparently without limit. It is as if an early





LXXVII.

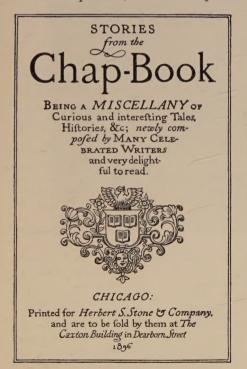
Great Staircase, Blois, Upper Portion.

Florentine, a latter day Frenchman and a Japanese of the last century were by some occult process fused into one personality. If he is studied as a maker of pictorial decorations it is obvious that he is easily in the front rank of the small band of men who are creating for us a national art.

We who have saved them (and who has not?) know the unfailing delight caused by the study of his extremely individual drawings in the *Chap Book* and kindred publications. These delightful works are of the utmost value, and to those who give them intelligent consideration, veritable sermons. Each of them is studied with an appreciation of fundamental art principles and an adjustment of means to end that mark him a consummate artist.

These little masterpieces have a breadth of execution, a purity of line and a resourcefulness of composition that put to shame larger and more pretentious efforts by men whose names are words to conjure with.

Equally brilliant have been his ventures in the poster field, and no appreciative amateur is without his compositions for the *Chap Book*, the *Post Express* 





or the "Martian" poster recently issued by the Harpers.

As well known and equally good are the book covers and title-pages of which he has produced a large number, and which for uniform excellence, careful consideration of spaces and a just proportion of type and decoration to the page, are quite comparable to the great Venetian printing of the early Renaissance. This is evidenced in numerous Chap Book covers, those for the Rochester Society of Arts and Crafts Catalogues, (of which society, by the by, he is one of the organizers, officers and guiding spirits,) and many others, including some now in press for Harpers Bros. To be included with the foregoing is the cover to the well known "Minor Italian Palaces," a collection of measured drawings and sketches, the result of six months' professional study in Italy.

Another result of this sojourn was the remarkably well written series of articles which saw light in the *American Architect*, as well also as a number of short stories, essays, etc., that were published in the *Bachelor of Arts* and in other magazines, all showing a literary talent as rare as it is fine.

Nor is this faculty confined to prose, for there are found from time to time, thoughts from his pen, always of a lofty nature, conveyed in verse that is conspicuous for its clarity and genuine poetic excellence.

Then, as if these varied "side issues," so to speak, were not enough for a busy professional man, this many-sided genius finds time to divert himself with pyrography, and his results are sufficiently attractive to cause one less gifted to adopt the artistic burning of wood as a life work.

Of his architectural drawings it is almost unnecessary to speak: always



LXXVIII.
Great Staircase, Blois, Interior.

brilliant and illuminating, personal, accurate and authoritative, possessing a splendid synthesis of line; texture suggested with an economy of means that is exasperating, and all combined with a sense of reserved power that makes them inimitable. The more they are studied the more obvious it becomes that they are an expression of the man himself, for they betray absolutely no influence save that which comes from his own inner consciousness. Imagine then, if you can, all of these varied attainments concentrated in a tall, slim, well set-up young man of much personal attraction, and you



# LYCEUM THEATRE MAR

have a fair working knowledge of Bragdon.

A model of deportment, of a character absolutely without blemish, he is modest and unaffected, reserved, quiet and difficult of access, yet when well known one of the most lovable of men. as well as one of the purest minded; and in the cosey corner from which he charms in the Vagabond Club are always to be found the little band of admiring friends and disciples, listening for the never-wanting epigram or the clarifying sentence that solves the problem under discussion, be it Schopenhauer's place among the philosophers, parlor-magic, the color in the works of Tieapelo, or the acceptability of the atomic theory; for all are his familiars, and even when

he mounts his vegetarian hobby and proclaims spinach as one of the greatest gifts to man, there is no murmur even from the brutalized eaters of the souldestroying cooked meats, so thoroughly imbued are they with the notion that to take issue with Bragdon is to proclaim one's self deficient in mental acumen.

For the few who are not acquainted with the chronology of his life, it is sufficient to say that Claude Fayette Bragdon is the son of George C. Bragdon, the well known poet and writer. He was born at Oberlin, Ohio, thirtyone years ago; and, at an age too early to acquire an appetite for office, he was removed to New York State, where, in an artistic and literary environment, he lived the life of a healthy, normal boy, and after acquiring a carefully planned education, cast about him for a vent for his artistic inclinations. During his leisure hours he had acquired a fair knowledge of wood-engraving, then at the height of its excellence, and before the introduction of "process"; but he ultimately decided that architecture possessed attractions too strong to be withstood. As a result of this decision, and after long and hard preparatory study, he found himself perched on a high stool, with Bruce Price of New York as his employer and mentor; from thence to the office of Green & Wicks of Buffalo, as a designer of matured powers and experience. Having completed his wanderjahr, he formed a co-partnership under the firm name of Gordon, Bragdon & Orchard, and for some years practiced with an estimated success, creating during this period one of the premiated designs for the proposed New York City Hall. A dissolution taking place, Bragdon continued to practice alone until 1896, when Mr. Con. Hillman became associated with him under the firm title of Bragdon & Hillman, a name already well and widely known.

HARVEY ELLIS.





LXXIX.

Great Staircase, Blois, Central Pier, Detail.

#### Club Notes.

A regular monthly meeting of the "T-Square Club" was held on Wednesday evening, October 20. This was the first meeting held by the Club in its new house. For some time past the Club has been without a home, holding its meetings in the offices of the various architects who have kindly extended their hospitality to their fellow This, however, was always members considered a merely temporary arrangement, and the Executive and House Committees have been active in their search for suitable quarters, and now feel that a place has been secured as nearly ideal as is possible under existing conditions, having rented on a five years' lease an old stable, the ground floor of which has been sub-let as a carpenter shop, the Club retaining the two upper floors for its own use upper floor has been converted into one large room 30 x 35 feet, where the Club will hold its meetings. Five casement windows extend all across the front and three at the back. A generous brick fireplace has been built at one side, and the walls and ceiling are lined with wood of a dark color. Very little was necessary to be done to this place, with its sloping ceiling and general Bohemian air, to make it a cosey home.

At the meeting the walls were well covered with the sketches made by the members during the past summer, which constituted the subject for competition at this meeting. Charles Z. Klauder, with a large collection of water color and pencil sketches showing much freedom and breadth of treatment, was awarded First Mention. Second Mention was awarded to Nicola D'Ascenzo, who displayed a number of admirable sketches and decorative compositions, mostly done in oil colors, and Third Mention to Frank A. Hays; who submitted some charming pencil sketches and water colors of an excellence we have grown to expect in his work. The sketches of Messrs. Bissegger, Mann and Pearson are also deserving of special mention, notably the pencil sketches of Mr. Bissegger.

Mr. Edward H. Coates, President of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, was elected an honorary member of the Club.

President Knickerbacker Boyd made a short address in which he said: "Your Executive Committee have felt the responsibility placed upon them of securing new quarters for the Club. We have had in our minds all along just such a place as this; a cosey, comfortable building, almost perfectly adapted to our needs.

"Now that we have a home of our own it may not be out of place to mention the necessity of a closer relationship among ourselves, and the advantages to be gained from a genuine enthusiasm manifested by participation

in the affairs of the Club.

"I consider that Club life must be made an integral portion of the development of this Club and ourselves.

"We have enlarged our sphere of activity; have taken important action on matters that concern us; have sent a representative to a foreign congress of architects, and have shown ourselves to be an aggressive, energetic organization.

"We have here banded together as a Club to educate and better ourselves. We must prove to the world that we can take our part in its affairs because we have that thorough knowledge of our profession which must cause our opinions to be recognized.

"Let us all pull together for the highest cause of our profession; let us work as a unit and make of this Club a

body compact and concrete."

Immediately after the meeting an informal smoker was held, and a collation served in honor of the occasion.

The second annual exhibition of the Cleveland Architectural Club opened on the tenth floor of the New England Building November 15, and continued to the 27th

The following cities, schools and clubs were represented: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Elmira, N.Y, Columbus, O., Detroit, Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell University, Lawrence School, Harvard, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Atelier Masquery, University of Pennsylvania, School of Industrial Art, Philadelphia, T-Square



LXXX.

Great Staircase, Blois, Ceiling.

Club, Chicago Architectural Club, Detroit Architectural Club and Cleveland Architectural Club.

Two prominent features of the exhibition were the memorial collection of the works of Richard Morris Hunt, loaned by Mrs. R. M. Hunt and Mr. R. H. Hunt, and the exhibit by the Government from the Nashville Exposition.

The Club now numbers a membership of nearly sixty, and has a healthy organization. The fact that it has taken up a second exhibition speaks for this. Plans have been perfected whereby class work will be taken up as soon as the work of the exhibition is out of the way.

Provided a sufficient interest is shown, the Boston Architectural Club will arrange for the season of '97-'98, the following classes: 1, Planning Class; 2, Pen and Ink Class; 3, Life Class; 4, French Class; 5, Modelling Class; 6, Water-Color Class; 7, Class in Decorative Design. Non-members are to be admitted to these classes on payment of a fee. There has also been arranged a series of "Municipal Problem Competitions," under the direction of Mr. Robert D. Andrews.

Messrs. Richard E. Schmidt, H. Von Holst, Arthur George Brown, Dan Everett Waid, Dwight W. Perkins, Harry Dodge Jenkins and Adolf Bernhard, the former officers of the Chicago Architectural Club, were the hosts at a "Bohemian Night," held by the Club on October 25. On November 1, Mr. William A. Otis delivered an illustrated lecture on "The Development of Architectural Styles," at the Club's rooms.

With the meeting held for the election of officers on Oct. 11, 1897, the Chicago Architectural Club entered upon a new year which gives promise of being one of the most prosperous, if not *the* most prosperous, in its history.

Never before have the members manifested so much interest in the work of the Club, and never before has there been promise of their work bearing such good fruit.

Classes in pen and ink rendering and in water colors have been formed with large attendances, the former class under the leadership of Mr. Birch Burdette Long and the latter under the leadership of Mr. Harry Dodge Jenkins. Both of these gentlemen have long been recognized as leaders in their respective branches of work.

An excellent lecture course has been arranged under the auspices of the Club, and the members will be given an opportunity of listening to men eminent in the profession of architecture. Lecture nights and Bohemian nights alternate, one or the other occurring each Monday evening, in connection with which the members will examine and criticize working drawings loaned by leading architects for the occasion. Also on these nights will be exhibited examples of class work and club competitions.

But more than any of the foregoing features, the scheme to instruct the members in the practical adaptations of architectural principles by means of the projet system, seems destined to bring the most comprehensive good, both to the individual members and to the Club itself. In pursuance of this scheme nine of the prominent architects and chief draughtsmen of Chicago have volunteered to assume the leadership of these different squads, each of which is to prepare a projet to be exhibited on certain Bohemian nights, the members of the squads to act as "hosts" on that night. These exhibitions of projets will occur every two weeks beginning January 4, and one projet will be exhibited each time. Each active member of the Club is assigned work in one of these groups. The gentlemen acting as leaders of these squads are Mr. Dwight H. Perkins, Mr. W. B. Mundie, Mr. Robert C. Spencer, Jr., Myron H. Hunt, Geo. G. Dean, Edward G. Garden, H. M. G. Garden, Frank Upman and Elmer C. Jensen. With this new feature added to the work of the Club, and with the members entering into the work with the greatest enthusiasm, there seems little doubt but that the coming year will be most successful, and that through these influences and opportunities the Chicago draughtsmen can hardly fail to be benefited.

In the first competition held by the class studying the orders in the Rochester Sketch Club, the following awards were made by the judge, Mr. E. S. Gordon: First Mention to W. L. Phillips; second, to A. M. Garbutt; third, to Francis S. Swales. problem was, "A window in which the Tuscan order must be employed." The next subject for competition is "A doorway to be placed under the window submitted in the previous competition and to be in the same style." The Club invites any draughtsman who will agree to submit one drawing a month in competition to become a member of this class.

The last exhibition of the Beaux-Arts Society was held on October 27, 28 and 29. Only the drawings of Class "B" were on exhibition. The judgment was held on the evening of Thursday, October 28, and mentions were awarded as follows:—

First Mention: John O. Lofquist. Second Mention: William A. Brown, R. Farrington, Arthur E. Wells.

Third Mention: H. Palmer Kelly, Christian F. Rosborg, Benj. W. Levitansky, Cornelius H. Wenn, George A. Licht, J. Henri de Sibour.

Hors de Concours: Henrik Wallin, Beverly S. King, A. H. Wright, C. L.

Herckes.

#### Notes.

The six-inch scale, advertised by the Keuffel & Esser Company in our last issue, is an article worth calling special attention to. It is made with absolute accuracy, as are all Keuffel & Esser instruments, and is put up in a substantial leather sheath. It costs \$1.38, which includes postage.

The two hundred photographic illustrations in the *Municipal Architecture of Boston*, are from negatives by E. E. Soderholtz, who has no equal in America for this class of work.



HOFFMAN HOUSE

NEW YORK CITY.

Venetian blinds may be classified as either good or bad, for those that are not perfect in workmanship and material are about the worst possible nuisance, and the bad, as usual, far out-number the good. Under the latter classification the Burlington blinds belong by reason of the marked improvements in fittings and method of hanging and the stock and workmanship put into them. Nothing but their superior quality accounts for the great number sold in New York City, where they have been put into the finest structures. We have illustrated above one of the buildings in New York, fitted with these blinds. It is a typical example of the sort of order that is constantly coming into the New York office of the Burlington Venetian Blind Co.



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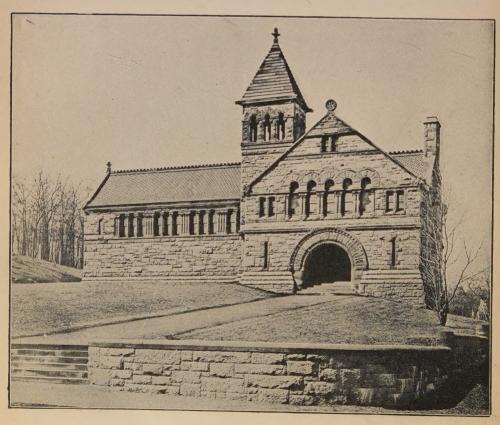


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H. H. Richardson, Architect.





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Library of St. Mark, Venice.